

## Message Text

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21

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8823

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 1375

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK, AF

SUBJ: GOP GEARS UP CAMPAIGN AGAINST OPPOSITION

MORE ECHOES TO SHERPAO ASSASSINATION

REF: ISLAMABAD 1301

SUMMARY. TEMPO OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY RISES AS GOVERNMENT MOVES ON SEVERAL FRONTS TO PUT MORE STRINGENT CURBS ON OPPOSITION AND WHIP UP PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ITS POLICIES IN THE WAKE OF SHERPAO'S ASSASSINATION. GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED BILLS WERE PASSED EFFECTIVELY ERASING THE OPPOSITION NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY FROM LEGAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION. THE CONSTITUTION WAS AMENDED TO ENLARGE THE GROUNDS AND DURATION OF DETENTION FOR ITS POLITICAL OPPONENTS UNDER EMERGENCY POWERS WHICH RELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT FROM NORMAL JUDICIAL PROCESSES. THE RULING PARTY HAS LAID DOWN ITS LINE FOR SUPPORTERS COUNTRY-WIDE TO FOLLOW, ACCUSING NAP OF ANTI-DEMOCRATIC, SECESSIONIST AND TERRORIST

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POLICIES IN COLLUSION WITH AFGHANISTAN. MEETINGS AND DEMON-

STRATIONS HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY BY THE PAKISTAN PEOPLES' PARTY (PPP) SOME OF WHICH HAVE RESULTED IN DESTRUCTION TO OPPOSITION PROPERTY. ARRESTS CONTINUE BUT NO CHARGES AGAINST ANY SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS HAVE YET BEEN LODGED. END SUMMARY.

1. PARLIAMENT WAS ADJOURNED SINE DIE ON FEBRUARY 12 AFTER THE GOVERNMENT HAD PUSHED THROUGH A SERIES OF BILLS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS. THE OPPOSITION -- MINUS ITS NAP CONTINGENT -- OBJECTED TO THE HASTE WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENT ACTED, PROTESTED THE BAN AND ARREST OF NAP LEADERS, AND FINALLY DECLARED A BOYCOTT OF BOTH HOUSES. THEY CHARGE THE GOVERNMENT WITH FAILURE TO ABIDE BY A RECENTLY CONCLUDED AGREEMENT WHICH HAD SET OUT A PROCEDURE FOR MUTUAL CONSULTATION. GOVERNMENT BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW LATE FEBRUARY 10 WHICH: 1) REMOVES IMMUNITY FROM DETENTION AND PERSONAL (COURT) APPEARANCE OF MEMBERS OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES AND 2) AMENDS POLITICAL PARTIES ACT, AS DESCRIBED REFTEL. IT NOW APPEARS THAT DRAFT BILLS WERE PRESENTED TO LEGISLATORS AS THEY ARRIVED IN ASSEMBLY HOUSE; NORMAL RULES OF PROCEDURE WAIVED TO PERMIT IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION; PASSED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND SENATE AND FINALLY SIGNED BY PRESIDENT AT 0100 HOURS FEBRUARY 11.

2. THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS WERE INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 11. IN AN EFFORT TO GAIN OPPOSITION COOPERATION, THEY WERE REFERRED FOR REVIEW TO A SELECT COMMITTEE INCLUDING OPPOSITION MEMBERS TO MEET THE SAME EVENING. THE PLOY FAILED, HOWEVER, AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND SENATE MET AND PASSED THE AMENDMENTS CONCERNING PREVENTIVE DETENTION AND STATE OF EMERGENCY WHILE OPPOSITION BOYCOTTED SESSION IN PROTEST. UNDER THE REVISED RULES, JUDICIAL REVIEW OF DETENTION ORDER (TO ESTABLISH THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUFFICIENT CAUSE) NOW MUST TAKE PLACE EACH THREE MONTHS (INSTEAD OF ONE) AND THE GOVERNMENT MAY TAKE 15 DAYS (INSTEAD OF SEVEN) TO INFORM THE DETAINED OF THE GROUNDS OF HIS DETENTION (ARTICLE 10 (4) AND (5)). SUBCLAUSE (7) HAS BEEN AMENDED TO ADD NEW CATEGORIES OF PERSONS FOR WHOM THE TIME LIMIT OF PREVENTIVE DETENTION DOES NOT APPLY -- PERSONS ACTING IN A MANNER "PREJUDICIAL TO THE INTEGRITY, SECURITY, OR DEFENSE OF PAKISTAN", ENGAGED IN ANTI-NATIONAL ACTIVITIES OR A MEMBER OF SUCH AN ASSOCIATION. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EMERGENCY PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION, WHICH RELIEVES THE GOVERNMENT OF OBSERVING NORMAL JUDICIAL PROCEDURES, WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT INDEFINITELY UNLESS REPEALED BY A JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT. THIS REMOVES GOVERNMENT OBLIGATION TO SEEK IT RENEWAL EVERY SIX MONTHS UNDER ARTICLE 232 (7)(B).

3. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO HAS EMBARKED ON A CAMPAIGN TO USE HIS PARTY TO EXPLAIN HIS POLICY TO THE PEOPLE AND DRUM UP

PUBLIC SUPPORT. IN A PARLIAMENTARY PARTY MEETING ON FEBRUARY 11, PPP SENATORS AND MNAS WERE GIVEN THE PARTY LINE. PARTY LINE SET BY BHUTTO SAID TO BE THAT HE IS CONVINCED ASSASSINATION COMMITTED BY NAP AND THUS BAN JUSTIFIED. HOME MINISTER QAIYUM KHAN REPORTEDLY ARGUED THERE THAT THE BAN SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN REMOVED (IN 1972) BUT BHUTTO REPLIED THAT HE HAD HAD TO WAIT FOR AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT.

4. INFERUCTIONS APPEAR TO HAVE GONE OUT TO ORGANIZE PUBLIC MEETINGS TO MOURN THE DEATH OF SHERPAO, DENOUNCE NAP AND WALI KHAN, AND TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT'S CLAMP DOWN ON THE OPPOSITION. THE LAST MENTIONED IS JUSTIFIED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ON THE GROUNDS THAT PAKISTAN'S SECURITY REQUIRES THE STRINGENT MEASURES AND REMOVAL OF NAP WILL IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN. THE LARGEST PROCESSION TO DATE APPEARS FROM PRESS REPORTS TO HAVE BEEN THAT IN PESHAWAR FEBRUARY 10 (REPORTED ISLAMABAD 1301). FEBRUARY 11 AND 12 SAW SMALLER GROUPS -- ORGANIZED BY PPP IN THE TOWNS AND CITIES OF PUNJAB AND FRONTIER -- DEMONSTRATING, RAISING SLOGANS, AND IN A FEW CASES, DAMAGING PROPERTY BELONGING TO OPPOSITION PARTIES AND INDIVIDUALS. CONSUL GENERAL LAHORE REPORTS THAT IN DELAYED RESPONSE, PROCESSION IN LAHORE ORGANIZED FEBRUARY 12TH WITH PARTICIPANTS BEING BUSSED IN FROM COUNTRYSIDE. ALTHOUGH MEDIA CLAIMS LARGE PROCESSIONS CONTINUING IN PESHAWAR -- WITH HEAVY STUDENT CONTINGENT -- CONSUL EVERTS REPORTS THAT CONTINUING RAINY WEATHER HAS KEPT CROWDS SMALL AND PEACEFUL.

5. NEWSPAPERS CARRY LISTS OF NAP OFFICE-BEARERS AND LEGISLATORS ARRESTED IN SIND AND PUNJAB, CONTINUING SWEEP OF SUCH PERSONS. CONSUL IN PESHAWAR NOTES THAT ARRESTS THERE HAVE SPREAD BEYOND NAP ACTIVISTS TO INCLUDE FORMER MEMBERS, SYMPATHIZERS, FRIENDS AND RELATIONS. PRESS REPORTS SEVERAL CONVICTIONS IN CASES PREVIOUSLY UNDER WAY UNDER ANTI-SABOTAGE LAW (WITH RELAXED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RULES OF EVIDENCE): ONE KAISTA KHAN JUST AWARDED SENTENCE SEVEN YEARS RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT IN SWAT BOMB CASE WHICH ALSO CHARGED NAP SECRETARY GENERAL AJMAL KHATTAK AND NAP "WORKER" HIDAYATULLAH, BOTH NOW REPORTEDLY IN AFGHANISTAN. (THERE HAVE BEEN ONE OR TWO OTHER CONVICTIONS IN WHICH THESE TWO FIGURES NAMED AS ACCESSORIES, BUT ALSO AT LEAST TWO ACQUITTALS IN CASES OF SIMILAR CHARGES). 58 PASHTOONKHAWA NAP WORKERS ARRESTED IN QUETTA FEBRUARY 10 AND 11 FOR DEMONSTRATING IN SUPPORT OF BIFURCATION OF QUETTA-PISHIN DISTRICT (SUCH DIVISION ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 12) IN MOVE UNRELATED TO NWFP EVENTS.

6. EMBASSY, WITH INPUTS FROM CONSULATES, IS PREPARING COUNTRY-WIDE ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY IMPACT ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE OF ASSASSINATION AND GOP REACTION.  
LUPPI

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## Message Attributes

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